

Remarks Greeting the British Cabinet and an Exchange With Reporters in London, United Kingdom

May 29, 1997

President Clinton. Thank you very much. Let me say that, first, I'm very appreciative of the honor of meeting with the entire Cabinet. And I have watched with enormous interest the energy and vigor with which you have all taken office and begun your work and the optimism with which you pursue it. I saw you on television last night being optimistic about peace in Ireland, which is an article of faith in my life and household, so I like that. And I agree that it is good for the United States to have a Britain that is strong in Europe and strong in its relations with the United States.

These last couple of days, not only commemorating the Marshall plan but asking the people of Europe to think about how we should organize the next 50 years to try to fulfill the unfulfilled promise of the people who envisioned the Marshall plan and signing the agreement between NATO and Russia, are part of the unfolding effort to create within Europe a continent that is democratic, undivided, and at peace for the first time ever. Europe has been periodically at peace but never all democratic and certainly never undivided.

And I see that as a way of organizing ourselves to meet the real challenges of the 21st century which will cross borders—terrorism, the dealing with racial and religious differences, and trying to minimize the extremist hatred that is gripping so much of the world and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and drug trafficking and the common environmental threats that will become a bigger part of every government's agenda for the next generation.

So this is a very exciting time. And I'm glad to be here, and I thank you.

Prime Minister Blair. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Q. Mr. President, you took office after 12 years of Republican rule in Washington. What advice do you have for these Labor Party members who have just taken office after so many years of a different party in

power? You had some missteps at the beginning and probably want to share some of that advice. [Laughter]

President Clinton. I think they're doing very well. I'd like to have a 179-seat majority. [Laughter] And I'm not going to give any advice; I'm going to sit here and take it as long as they'll let me do it. [Laughter]

Prime Minister Blair. And I would like to make sure that we have a second term in office—[laughter]—so I'll take his advice, too.

Thanks very much, guys. You know there will be a press conference, of course, later where you'll be able to ask questions.

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, would you care to share with us some of your thoughts about some of the lessons you learned in getting elected from President Clinton's playbook, political playbook?

Prime Minister Blair. Well, I'm sure we'll share lots of lessons together. But as I say, you'll have an ample opportunity to ask us about them later this afternoon.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 11:30 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at 10 Downing Street, prior to a meeting with Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom in London

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Prime Minister Blair. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. The President and I have ranged over many subjects in the hours we have had together, and we intend to continue those discussions later today.

We've discussed Bosnia and our continuing efforts to work together in addressing one of the most pressing crises on the international agenda. We've discussed, obviously, Northern Ireland and our determination to do all that we can to bring about the cease-fire that will allow all-party talks to proceed in the best possible climate and that a cease-fire is genuine and credible with all the parties there.

We agreed that NATO is and will remain the cornerstone of Europe's defense. And I